How the Government Will House Its Army of Canal Employes.

FRENCH COTTAGES

These Being Fitted Up for Occupancy-Big Houses of De Lesseps and Others.

By Frank G. Carpenter.

Tincle Sam will soon have 2,000 houses ady for his canal employes. Within the her have arrived from the States. Shipload after shipload has come from the Gulf of Mexico and Puget sound, and I is now piled up in the lumber yards at different points over our ten-mile strip A big saw and plaining mill has been ed out of the old French machinery at Colon, and well-equipped tinning, blacksmithing and plumbing shops are in operation at Ancon. At the several stations along the canal route gangs of men are at work building new houses and repairing the old ones left by the French. Altogether there are more than 800 plumbers, painters, carpenters, finsmiths, masons and other mechanics and laborers engaged in such construction. Outside the cost of the material, more than \$100,000 has already been spent, and it is estimated that more than \$2,000,000 will be so expended during the coming year. In the administration building at Panama a corps of architects from the Treasury Department at Washington, and from New York, Boston and Chicago is working away night and day making plans and specifications, the whole force being under the direction of the supervising architect, Mr. M. O. Johnson, who was formerly one of the architects of the Illinois Central system, and was brought been by Chief Fenginer Wallace. Colon, and well-equipped tinning Central system, and was brought y Chief Engineer Wallace. A Part of Uncle Sam's Bargain

A Part of Uncle Sam's Bargain.

During my stay at Panama I have spent much time with the supervising arcaitect. I have traveled with him over the isthmus inspecting the buildings which came to us as a part of Uncle Sam's bargain, and in looking over the plans of the new houses in course of construction. He tells me that we received as a part of our canal purchase more than 2,400 different buildings in various stages of dilapidation, we got 2,200 houses, most of which were cottages intended as the homes of the workmen. A few had been built in the United States and sent knocked down to Panama, and he remainder were made of imported American lumber roofed with a fine quality of galvanized with a fine quality of galvanized which has withstood this tropica

ron, which has withstood this tropical cilimate for twenty-five years.

These houses are to be seen at Ancon and Colon, at the two ends of the canal, and they are scattered in villages all along the route from the Atlantic to the Pacific. They are of different sizes, some of one story, costing from several numbered to a thousand dollars or more such, and others the magnificent resistences built for De Lesseps and his son at Christobal and the mathsion-26 Monnager Dingler on the slopes of Ancon. each ir Dingler on the slopes of Ancon, each which cost from \$56,000 to \$75,000 addition there are a score or more great warehouses and machine shops great warehouses and machine shops tered over the isthmus, railroad states, office buildings and wharves at ama and Colon, hospital buildings she have altogether cost millions, stade at the two ends of the line, and big three-story structures in the tof Panama, one of which is the al Office building, covering a full k, and the other the fine residence of chief engineer, which was formerly home of the French canal director. Ravaged by Time and the White

Ants.

Ants.

I asked the supervising architect to give me some idea of the condition of these buildings at the 'time they were handed over to us. Said he:

"Nearly everything left by the French was in a state of dilapidation. No repairs had been done for years. The paint had been worn off by the weather and the buildings had also suffered greatly from the white ants. These insects have eaten at the porches, and they have made their way into some of the larger buildings and chewed off the ends of the joints so that one side of the floors is almost entirely unsupported. This was the case with the residence of the chief engineer. The floors were uneven throughout, and one felt very unsafe while walking across them. The supports of the front stailrway were almost the transfer way and the ants had while walking across them. The supports of the front stairway were almost entirely eaten away, and the anis had even fed on the furniture. One chair, for instance, looked perfectly sound, but when sat upon it went down with a crash, carrying its occupant to the floor. The ants had consumed the inside of the woodwork, leaving only the shell of the are now using for a hospital. It is we are now using for a hospital. It is we are now using for a hospital. It is we are now using for a hospital it. The sund one cannot tell the amount of their destruction except by sounding the timbers. They are especially fond of white pine, but less so of , yellow pine, Oregon fir, redwood and cyprus, and for that reason we are using those woods. The French builders coated their girders with the horses drank out of a french builders coated their girders with the horses drank out of a french builders coated their girders with the horses drank out of a french builders coated their girders with the horses drank out of a french builders coated their girders with the horses drank out of a french builders coated their girders with the horses drank out of a french builders coated their girders with the horses drank out of a french builders coated their girders with the horses drank out of a french builders coated their girders with the horses drank out of a french builders coated their girders with the horses drank out of a french builders coated their girders with the horses drank out of a french building will be three stories are the pice. One of the most of the most of the houses at Christobal. Uncle Sam's beautiful annex to the city of Colon, and a large (Christobal. Uncle Sam's beautiful annex to the city of Colon, and a large (Christobal. Uncle Sam's beautiful annex to the city of Colon, and a large (Christobal. Uncle Sam's beautiful annex to the city of Colon, and a large of workmen are now living the the canal which have a rest.

It is a fetting well or who have to lie off for a fest.

When have repaired most of the houses at Chri

gave me complete relief."

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wood is not exposed to the air. Extravagant Builders.

Extravagant Builders."
continued Mr. Joinson, "their chief idea seems to have been to make the buildings as expensive as possible. This is especially the case with the foundations, which have often cost more than the structures above them. In the laborers' camp at Culobra the cottages stand upon plers of solid masonry three times as large as are needed to carry their loads, and at La Boca there is a two-story house

What Is Being Done.

I asked Mr. Johnson to give me some

Wallace, and have put the hospitals here at Colon in sanitary condition. We are building a large sanitarium on the Is-

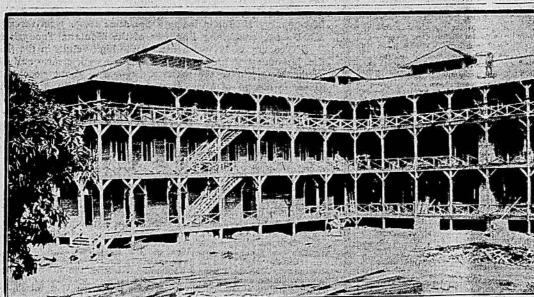
Homes for Culebra.

"We are also building quarters for married men at Culebra. We have designed twenty and are completing four every week. We have twenty-five portable houses there, each consisting of a room and a porch. They will do for bachelors. We are also repairing a number of the old French houses, and a little farther on at Rio Grande Superior are renovating forty such houses for the workingmen. The latter buildings are dormitories, with a special house, containing dining rooms and kitchen, to be used as a canteen to feed the men.

"In addition to this," the supervising architect continued, "we are repairing other buildings all along the line. We are putting up a big wharf at La Boca, and we shall add greatly to the hospitals at Ancon, erecting ice plants and cold storage plants there. We are also making roads and are rapidly getting the quarters for the employes into comfortable shape."

How Our Married Men Will

The married mechanics and their fam



NEW BACHELOR QUARTERS JUST ERECTED FOR UNCLE SAM'S EMPLOYES AT CULEBRA.

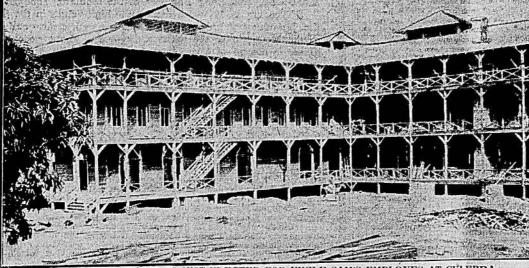
in height with vorandas running around it. There will be double lattice doors instead of windows opening upon the borches, and on the first story the inside walls will be rolling partitions, which will enable the whole to be thrown into one room for lectures and social purposes, Homes for Culebra.

American Homes at Panama. American Homes at Panama.

While in the architect's office I looked over the plans of the different kinds of buildings which are now being made for the American employes. The houses vary according to the rank and salary of the man and as to his 'amily. In the baphelor quarters at Culebra above referred to, the cellings are thirteen feet high. Each bedroom is twelve by fourteen, with Prench windows to the floor. The doors open out upon porches and the ventilation is perfect. In that building there will be sixty-two rooms, each of which will be occupied by a bachelor workman.

Live.

The married mechanics and their families [will have good accommodallons.]
Many of the French cottages are now occupied by thein, and those which have been repaired are comfortable. Each cottage has several large rooms with wide windows and doors. The walls, as is the case with nearly all the buildings here, are of wood, painted in bright colors, or plaster or pager being used. A comno plaster or paper being used. A com-mon type of building is a one-story cot-tage, containing two rooms and a kitch-en, with verandas at the front and back



chambers, dining rooms, amusement rooms, kitchens and bath houses. They stand on a high bluff, surrounded by a grove of coconnut palms and overlooking the sea. The island has pure water, it affords excellent surf bathing and it will be valuable for our people who are getting well or who have to lie off for a rest.

Cost of Provisions at Panama. At present nearly every good thing eaten at Panama comes from abroad. The 1sthmian soil is good and the climate such that almost anything can be raised; but we get our sweet uctatoes from Peru, Irish potatoes and cabbages from New York, and other vegetables from New Orleans. Everything is high. Chickens for instance, cost 75 cents each, and

are \$5 per month. FRANK G. CARPENTER.

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The Confederate Museum

STEAMBOATS.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

the houses will have shower baths and all will be supplied with cold water Cooking and Eating.

will also be coffee houses, where a man may buy what he pleases and pay for what he orders. The present rate for board at Culebra is, I am told, just about \$5 per week.

The New Commissariat.

The New Commissariat.

As to the cooking and eating arrangeboard themselves, the commission will
soon have a commissary department like
that found at our army posts. This will
be in charge of Paymaster E. C. Tobey,
the chief of materials and supplies, and
it will result in the men and their familles getting their food and clothing as
low, if not lower, than the same things
could be bought in the United States.
This department will import all sorts of
American provisions and the other necessities of life, and will furnish them to the
men at a little over their actual cost,
including that of managing the department. It is probable that fresh meat will
be sent down from America and kept in
cold storage here, and that the commissariat may also furnish ice and vegetables.
Cost of Provisions at Panama.

New York, and other vegetables from New Orleans, Everything is high. Chickens, for instance, cost 75 cents each, and eggs about 56 cents a dozen. Eggs ard sold in the markets in couples, two being wrapped up in a corn husk, with strings about the middle and at the ends to keep them from breaking. Pish are to be had in great variety and comparatively cheap. Fresh meat is dear and poor in comparison with that of the United States.

Tropleal fruits are delicious and cheap. One can buy a pineapple for seven cents and a cocoanut for five cents, while bananas cost one cent each. One of the best fruits here is the papaya. It looks like a cross between a muskmelon and a gigantic cucumber, and when cut open shows a rich yellow flesh. The papaya is eaten with a spoon; it is much liked for breakfast or dessert. It grows at the top of a little tree, being attached by a stem directly to the trunk.

As to servants, they are comparatively cheap here, but by no means so good as our servants at home. I know one lady who has a girl come in for half of each day, at is her duty to cook the dinner and clean up the house, and her wages are \$5 per month.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

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